

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 IO-13 ISO-00 EURE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07

H-03 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01

SPC-03 SS-15 ACDA-19 NEA-10 TRSE-00 MBFR-04 SAJ-01

NIC-01 STR-08 AID-20 COME-00 EB-11 FRB-02 XMB-07

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EA-11 /216 W

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P R 211133Z SEP 73

FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2270

USIA WASHDC PRIORITY

INFO USDEL SALT TWO GENEVA

AMEMBASSY BELGRADE

USMISSION BERLIN

AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST UNN

AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST

USMISSION GENEVA

USMISSION NATO

AMEMBASSY PRAGUE

AMEMBASSY SOFIA

AMEMBASSY WARSAW

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 MOSCOW 11479

GENEVA FOR USDEL CSCE

USIA FOR IEE, IBS

E.O. 11652: XGDS

TAGS: PFOR, PINT, UR, US

SUBJ: DISSIDENCE AND DETENTE: BREZHNEV'S DILEMMA

1. SUMMARY: EMBASSY DOES NOT AGREE WITH CURRENT
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SPECULATION THAT BREZHNEV AND HIS POLICIES ARE

(#)

TRPUGJR/ AND INFORMATION. WHILE DANGERS OF

INTERNAL DISTURBANCE MAY NOT SEEM GREAT IN WESTERN EYES, PERCEPTIONS OF SOVIET LEADERS MAY BE DIFFERENT. ANY WESTERN ATTEMPTS TO CONDITION DETENTE ON INTERNAL RELAXATION THUS TEND TO REINFORCE OLD REFLEXES AND PUT THE PRESSURE ON BREZHNEV TO DIG IN HIS HEELS WITH FINALITY. THAT HE HAS NOT YET DONE SO -- AND HAS IN FACT ENDED JAMMING AND TONED DOWN THE ANTI-SAKHAROV CAMPAIGN -- IS TESTIMONY TO HIS APPRECIATION OF THE HIGH STAKES HE HAS PLACES ON THE RELATIONSHIP WITH THE U.S. IT ALSO ILLUSTRATES DEGREE OF CONTROL WHICH HE AND HIS PRO-DETENTE FOLLOWERS STILL WIELD IN THIS REGIME.

2. IN THE EMBASSY'S JUDGMENT, THEREFORE, WE ARE IN A DELICATE PERIOD. DESPITE THE LOGIC BEHIND DETENTE, AND DESPITE BREZHNEV'S COMMITMENT, A CLEAR-CUT FAILURE ON MFN OR A BREAKDOWN ON CSCE STEMMING FROM WESTERN PRE-OCCUPATION ABOUT SOVIET INTERNAL AFFAIRS COULD START A DOWNWARD PSYCHOLOGICAL SPIRAL BACK TOWARD ATTITUDES REMINISCENT OF THE COLD WAR PERIOD. IN POLICY TERMS, CONTINUED VIGOROUS ADMINISTRATION EFFORTS ON BEHALF OF MFN, AS WELL AS SUPPORT FOR TRADE EXPANSION AND CREDIT ACTIVITIES, ARE OBVIOUSLY ESSENTIAL AT THIS JUNCTURE. ENERGETIC FOLLOW-THROUGH ON VARIOUS BILATERAL AGREEMENTS IS LIKEWISE IMPORTANT. IN FIELD OF EXPANDING CONTACTS, A RELAXATION OF U.S. POLICY ON TRADE UNION VISITS WOULD BE REGARDED AS A SIGNIFICANT POSITIVE SIGNAL IN MOSCOW. AND CURRENT WASHINGTON ATTENTION TO VOA PROGRAMMING IS HIGHLY DESIRABLE. END SUMMARY.

3. CROSS CURRENT IN THE HANDLING OF DISSIDENCE AND ON THE ISSUE OF CONTACTS AND EXCHANGE OF INFORMATION WITH THE WEST HAVE LED TO A RESURGENCE OF SPECULATION THAT BREZHNEV AND HIS DETENTE POLICY ARE IN TROUBLE. THE EMBASSY IS SKEPTICAL THAT DRASTIC EVENTS AWAIT BREZHNEV JUST AROUND THE CORNER, AS SOME OF OUR COLLEAGUES - PARTICULARLY THE BRITISH - JW ARE INCLINED TO BELIEVE. NEVERTHELESS, THE INTERACTION OF INTERNAL CONFIDENTIAL

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SECURITY, FOREIGN POLICY AND LEADERSHIP JOSTLING IS CRUCIAL TO THE FUTURE OF THIS REGIME AND ITS BEHAVIOR.

4. EFFECT OF DISSIDENCE ON INTERNAL SECURITY.

A. EMBASSY SUBSCRIBES TO CONVENTIONAL WISDOM THAT RUSSIAN POPULATION IS UNLIKELY TO BE DEEPLY AGITATED BY ANYTHING SHORT OF MAJOR FOOD CRISIS OR THREAT OF WAR, AND THAT THERE IS NOT PROSPECT FOR UNREST BASED ON HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUES. WHILE THERE MAY BE A LONG-TERM POTENTIAL FOR DISAFFECTION AMONG NATIONAL AND RELIGIOUS MINORITIES, THERE SEEMS TO BE NO LINK WITH RUSSIAN DISSIDENCE EXCEPT FOR OCCASIONAL CONFLUENCE OF ACTIVITIES OF DISSIDENTS AND EMIGRATION-ORIENTED JEWS.

B. THERE MAY BE SOME GROUND FOR REGIME CONCERN BECAUSE OF HYDRA-LIKE PRESISTENCE OF SMALL BAND OF DISSIDENTS. REMNANTS OF THE TAKIR-KRASIN GROUP RECENTLY ISSUED ANOTHER STATEMENT TO THE WESTERN PRESS, SOME FORMER POLICIAL PRISONERS HAVE JUST SENT AN APPEAL TO CSCE, AND REPEATED CONTACTS OF SAKHAROV AND SOLZHENITSYN WITH FOREING JOURNALISTS HAVE KEPT THE WORLD SPOTLIGHT ON HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUES IN THE SOVIET UNION. FURTHER MORE, THE GAUNTLET THROWN DOWN BY SAKHAROV POSES A PARTICULARLY DELICTE PROBLEM FOR THE REGIME: IF HE IS PUNISHED, THERE COULD BE EXTENSIVE FOREIGN POLICY REVERBERATIONS; IF HE GOES UNPUNISHED, INTELLECTUALS IN AND ON THE FRINGES OF THE ESTABLISHMENT -- SOME OF WHOM REFUSED TO SIGN THE INITIAL FLURRY OF PUBLIC ATTACKS AGAINST HIM -- COULD BE ENCOURAGED TO ACT MORE INDEPENDENTLY.

C. ON BALANCES, HOWEVER, IT SEEMS CLEAR THAT POLITICAL DISSIDENCE IN THE USSR DOES NOT PRESENT A MAJOR PROBLEM OF INTERNAL SECURITY AT THE PRESENT TIME.

5. LEADERSHIP PERCEPTIONS OF THE PROBLEM.

SOVEIT LEADERS, HOWEVER, MAY PERCEIVE THE PROBLEM DIFFERENTLY. EMBASSY SUSPECTS THERE ARE DIFFERENCES WITHIN THE LEADERSHIP ON THIS SCORE, BUT FOLLOWING ANALYSIS IS LARGELY SPECULATIVE.

A. EACH MEMBER OF HIGH LEADERSHIP STILL SEEMS TO SUFFER IN SOME DEGREE FROM SIEGE MENTALITY AND THEREFORE IS CONDITIONED TO PLACE HIGH PRIORITY ON INTERNAL CALM.

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NOTE BY OC/T: MOSCOW 11479(SEC 1 OF 2). (#) OMISSION. CORRECTION TO FOLLOW.

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EA-11 AEC-11 /227 W

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P R 211133Z SEP 73
FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2271
USIA WASHDC PRIORITY
INFO USDEL SALT TWO GENEVAE
AMEMBASSY BELGRADE
USMISSION BERLIN
AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST UNN
AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST
USMISSION GENEVA
USMISSION NATO
AMEMBASSY PRAGUE
AMEMBASSY SOFIA
AMEMBASSY WARSAW

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 MOSCOW 11479

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (PARA 7 SUBPARA E OMITTED)

C. AT OTHER END OF SPECTRUM, SOME LEADERS ARE GENUINELY FEARFUL OF INTERNAL EFFERVESCENCE (THIS INCLUDES SOME WHOSE WATCHDOG FUNCTIONS GIVE THEM A VESTED INTEREST). OTHERS MAY NOT BE WORRIED ABOUT REAL INTERNAL DANGERS BUT SEE THE THREAT THEREOF AS MEANS OF SLOWING DOWN DETENTE.

D. IN THIS CONTEXT, YAKIR-KRASIN TRIAL COULD
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EASILY HAVE BEEN AGREED TO BY DETENTE ADVOCATES AS NECESSARY PRE-EMPTIVE MOVE EXPECTED TO ENSURE THE NEEDED INTERNAL CALM.

E. OFFENSIVE BY SAKHAROV (AND TO LESSER EXTENT SOLZHENITSYN) AND ITS IMPACT IN WEST MAY NOT HAVE BEEN FULLY ANTICIPATED BY DETENTE ADVOCATES. IT MAY HAVE BEEN HOPED FOR -- POSSIBLY EVEN FACILITATED -- BY

DETENTE SKEPTICS. PRESS CAMPAIGN AGAINST SAKHAROV, WHICH DID EVEN MORE TO STIR UP WESTERN INDIGNATION THAN DID SAKHAROV'S ORIGINAL STATEMENTS, OBVIOUSLY SERVED THE INTERESTS OF DETENTE SKEPTICS. THIS PRESUMABLY IS WHY THE CAMPAIGN WAS SUDDENTLY DECELERATED.

F. EMBASSY BELIEVES THAT ONE OF KEYS TO PRESENT REGIME ATTITUDES ON DETENTE LIES IN BREZHNEV'S AUGUST 15 ALMA ATA SPEECH, WHICH CONTAINED WHAT WE HAVE TERMED THE "VICTORY THROUGH CONTACTS" THEME. CONTEMPLATING WITH EQUANIMITY A COMPETITION OF IDEAS, HE ALSO NEATLY PUT THE MONKEY ON THE PROPAGANDISTS' BACKS BY ASSERTING THAT IT IS UP TO THEM TO DO A BETTER JOB OF ARGUING THE CASE FOR COMMUNIST IDEAS. WE JUDGE THAT BREZHNEV GROUP SAW THE NECESSITY FOR PERMITTING GREATER CONTACTS -- NOT ONLY AS THE PRICE OF DETENTE, BUT ALSO AS A POSITIVE

BENEFIT IN INFUSING NEW SCIENTIFIC IDEAS AND IN RAISING SOVIET PRESTIGE AS SELF-CONFIDENT SUPERPOWER. THE ALMA ATA LINE NOT ONLY PROVIDED IDEOLOGICAL JUSTIFICATION BUT ALSO PUT THE RESPONSIBILITY FOR PROPERLY CARRYING IT OUT ON THE PROPAGANDISTS AND IDEOLOGUE.

G. AT FIRST, SOME PROPAGANDISTS MERELY IGNORED THE ALMA ATA LINE. LATER, HAVING PROBABLY BEEN GIVEN DIRECTIVES TO PUBLICIZE IT, THEY HEMMED IT IN WITH QUALIFICATIONS. THEY SEEMD TO BE TRYING TO WRIGGLE OFF THE HOOK.

H. MEANWHILE, THE REGIME WAS DECIDING ON AN ACTION WHICH WOULD SPEAK LOUDER THAN PROPAGANDISTS' WARNINGS ABOUT THE SUBVERSIVE CHARACTER OF WESTERN IDEAS: CESSATION OF JAMMING VOA, BBC AND DEUTSCHE WELLE.

I. THE DECISION TO SHUT DOWN SOME JAMMERS, WHILE PROBABLY IN THE WORKS FOR SOME TIME IN CONNECTION WITH SECOND PHASE OF CSCE, ALSO FITS WITH SOME PECULIARITIES OF THE HANDLING OF THE YAKIR-KRASIN-SAKHAROV-SOLZHENITSYN
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AFFAIR: INSTEAD OF MIMIMIZING INTERNAL PUBLICITY ABOUT THE AFFAIR, THE REGIME REVEALED MUCH MORE ABOUT THE PRINCIPALS' VIEWS AND ACTIVITIES THAN SEEMED TO BE NECESSARY. AND SOVIET OFFICIALS IN MOSCOW, AS WELL AS ABROAD, WERE WILLING -- EVEN ANXIOUS -- TO TALK ABOUT IT. THIS MAY MEAN THAT THE REGIME IS GETTING THE MESSAGE THAT IT MUST AT LEAST ACT MORE SELF-CONFIDENT ABOUT ITS INTERNAL PROBLEMS.

6. PROSPECTS.

A. EMBASSY BELIEVES THAT BREZHNEV IS IN FIRM CONTROL, REMAINS COMMITTED TO DETENTE POLICY, AND IS PREPARED CAUTIOUSLY TO OPEN UP SOVIET UNION IN SLOW STAGES TO WESTERN CONTACTS AND INFORMATION. ACTIVE POLITICAL DISSIDENCE IS A DIFFERENT MATTER: HIS OWN INCLINATIONS, AS WELL AS THE NATURE OF HIS POLITICAL PROBLEMS WITHIN THE LEADERSHIP, PROPEL HIM TOWARD STRONG MEASURES. BUT THE EXPEDIENCY OF DETENTE ARGUES THAT NO ACTION BE TAKEN AGAINST SAKHAROV, AT LEAST AT PRESENT. AND IF SAKHAROV AND SOLZHENITSYN WERE TO FALL SILENT, THE REGIME MIGHT BE CONTENT TO REMAIN AT A STANDOFF INDEFINITELY.

B. DESPITE BREZHNEV'S COMMITMENTS AND HIS APPARENTLY STRONG POSITION AT THE HEAD OF THE LEADERSHIP, HOWEVER, DETENTE MUST STILL BE REGARDED AS A FRAGILE FLOWER. CRUDE ACTION AGAINST SAKHAROV AND SOLZHENITSYN, STEMMING EITHER FROM PRESSURE WITHIN THE LEADERSHIP OR FROM INTOLERABLE NEW INITIATIVES BY THE DISSIDENTS, COULD SCUTTLE THE CHANCES FOR MFN. OR MFN COULD BE DRAGGED DOWN BY THE BURDEN OF EMIGRATION AND DISSIDENT MATTERS ALREADY ENCUMBERING IT. IN EITHER CASE, THE

RESULT WOULD PROBABLY BE NOT AN IMMEDIATE, OPEN
TURNABOUT IN SOVIET POLICY BUT A SHIFT IN EMPHASIS:
MORE ATTENTION TO "VIGILANCE" AND LESS TO "HONEST
COMPETITION OF IDEAS"; LESS CONCERN WITH WESTERN
SENSIBILITIES AND MORE EFFORT TO ERADICATE ALL SIGNS OF
INDEPENDENT THINKING IN THE USSR; MORE PUBLIC PUGNACIOUS-
NES TOWARD THE U.S. AND LESS WILLINGNESS TO COOPERATE
WITH THE U.S. IN INTERNATIONAL FORUMS. IN SHORT,
DESPITE THE CONTINUED EXISTENCE OF THE BASIC REASONS
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FOR SOVIET PURSUIT OF DETENTE -- AVOIDANCE OF NUCLEAR
WAR, ECONOMIC NEEDS, HIGH COST OF THE ARMS RACE AND
FEAR OF CHINA -- A DOWNWARD PSYCHOLOGICAL SPIRAL COULD
BEGIN, PUSHING EAST AND WEST BACK TOWARD LESS CONSTRUC-
TIVE AND COOPERATIVE ATTITUDES THAN PRESENTLY EXIST.
IT WOULD BE IMMATERIAL WHETHER OR NOT BREZHNEV REMAINED
IN POWER; HE WOULD IN ANY CASE BE THE PRISONER OF EVENTS.

7. THE TACTICAL AND POLICY CONCLUSIONS TO BE DRAWN
FROM THIS SITUATION ARE FOR THE MOST PART A CONTINUATION
OF U.S. EFFORTS ALONG CURRENT LINES. EMBASSY DOES
HOWEVER HAVE FOLLOWING COMMENTS AND SUGGESTIONS:

A. THE MOST IMPORTANT QUESTION IS TRADE, PARTIC-
ULARLY MFN BUT ALSO U.S. GOVERNMENT BACKING FOR TRADE
EXPANSION AND CREDIT OFFERINGS.

B. CONTINUED ENERGETIC FOLLOW-THROUGH ON THE MANY
BILATERAL AGREEMENTS CONCLUDED WITH THE USSR WILL
HELP CONVEY OUR LONG-TERM INTEREST IN EXPANDING AND
DEEPENING BILATERAL RELATIONS.

C. RELAXATION OF U.S. POLICY AGAINST SOVIET
TRADE UNION VISITS WOULD BE REGARDED BY MOSCOW AS A
SIGNIFICANT POSITIVE SIGNAL IN THE CONTACTS FIELD, AND
WULD BE ONE USEFUL RESPONSE TO THE END OF VOA JAMMING
(SEPTEL).

D. CURRENT WASHINGTON REVIEW OF VOA POLICIES IS TIM-
ELY OPPORTUNITY TO ENSURE THAT, WHILE NOT PULLING PUNCHES
ABOUT U.S. PUBLIC OPINION ON DISSIDENCE, VOA PUTS THE
MAIN ACCENT ON THE POSTIVE BY MEANS OF HEAVY ATTENTION
TO CURRENT DEVELOPMENTS IN BILATERLAL RELATIONS (SEPTEL).

E. WE ASSUME DEPARTMENT AND US DEL CSCE WILL
CONTINUE TO FINE-TUNE OUR APPROACH TO THE FREE MOVEMENT
ISSUES AT GENEVA, WHICH ARE HIGHLY PERTINENT TO SOVIET
AS WELL AS U.S. PERCEPTIONS OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN
DISSIDENCE AND DETENTE (SEPTEL).

F. HIGH-LEVEL VISITS TO THE USSR, SUCH AS RECENT
ONE BY SECRETARY WEINBERGER AND UPCOMING VISIT BY
SECRETARY SHULTZ AND DELEGATION, ARE HIGHLY APPRECIATED
BY SOVIETS AS DEMONSTRATION OF DEEPENING RELATIONSHIP.
BY SAME TOKEN, VISITS IN OTHER DIRECTION -- SUCH AS

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PROPOSED INVITATION TO MAZUROV (MOSCOW 9101) -- CAN
ALSO SERVE USEFUL PURPOSES.
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